

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

Chairman

Published by the Commission on Public Relations

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CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2,4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates: Japan ¥ 700, Foreign (Sea mail) \$ 2.00, (Air mail) \$ 3.50.

No. 306

March 30, 1967

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NEW NCCJ OFFICERS ELECTED

A fresh but veteran group of executives won election to top posts of the National Christian Council of Japan at the church organization's 1967 Annual Meeting held at St. Alban's church, Tokyo, on March 16 and 17.

The newly elected chairman of Japan NCC is The Rev. Isamu Omura, formerly moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan and a pioneer in reestablishment of relationships between Japanese and Korean Christians. Backstopping Dr. Omura are two distinguished vice-chairman, The Rt. Rev. Bishop David Makoto Goto (Japan Episcopal Church) and The Rev. Atsumi Tasaka, a Lutheran.

Secretaries of JNCC for the coming year are The Rev. Yoshikazu Nakajima (Japan Baptist Church) and The Rev. In Ha Lee (The Korean Church in Japan).

HIROSHI SHIMMI IS NEW DEAN OF RELIGION AT AOYAMA

Former WCC Youth Division secretary Hiroshi Shimmi will return to Japan in middle of April to begin new responsibilities as dean of religion in Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo. He will also serve on the giant school's Engineering faculty.

Enroute to his homeland Mr. Shimmi will attend the East Asia Christian Conference meeting of youth leaders at Singapore, April 1.

KYODAN-RELATED MISSIONARIES MEET AT ATAMI

More than 280 Kyodan-related missionaries met at the resort city of Atami on March 28 and 29 for their annual fellowship meeting. A High point of the conference was a communion service, with the sacraments administered by Kyodan moderator Masahisa Suzuki and missionary Richard Norton.

The last evening of the conference was enlivened by a play, "Exodus and Easter", especially adapted to a musical score written by Scott Flanagan. The play, and the conference discussions, centered around the relevance of Harvey Cox' book, The Secular City, to the missionary enterprise in Japan.

LITTLE GIRL TRAVELS ALONE FROM BOLIVIA

The Kyodan's secretary for World Ministries, George Hanabusa, straightened his tie as the big Cathay Pacific airliner rolled down the runway at Haneda airport on March 23rd. George had a date with a lady.

The lady turned-out to be 11-year old Emiko Yamahata, the daughter of the Rev. Katsumi Yamahata, a Kyodan missionary in Bolivia. When the bays of the airliner opened, Emiko walked alone down the stairs to meet Mr. Hanabusa and his delegation. She had made the long flight from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, all by herself.

Emiko-san, who left Japan for Bolivia eight years ago, will remain in her native country to complete her education. She will make her home with her grandparents, The Rev. and Mrs. Tokimasa Wakabayashi, of Bohu Baptist Church, Yamaguchi Prefecture.

NCCJ RELEASES CHURCH MEMBERSHIP FIGURES FOR 1966

The National Christian Council's church statistics for 1966 underscore again the divided nature of Japanese Protestantism. Sixty-two church groups (of 87 in Japan) have total memberships of under 1,000, and nine churches have less than 100 communicants.

The "Bix Six" in Japanese Protestant circles are as follow:

| | |
|---|---------|
| United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan)..... | 198,437 |
| Spirit of Jesus organization..... | 56,712 |
| Anglican Church..... | 32,554 |
| Baptist Convention..... | 18,829 |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church..... | 14,309 |
| Presbyterian Reformed Church of Japan (Nikki KyoKai)..... | 11,823 |

In terms of organized congregations and preaching points, the line-up is slightly different:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Kyodan..... | 1,621 |
| Spirit of Jesus organization..... | 415 |
| Anglican Church..... | 329 |
| Baptist Convention..... | 234 |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church..... | 137 |
| Church of the Nazarene..... | 137 |

Japan has 6,723 ministers, including 1,447 missionaries.

CHANGE PROPOSED IN JAPANESE CHARACTER FOR "KIRISUTO"

A proposal to drop the Chinese character for "Kirisuto" (Christian) and substitute the symbols for the term in Kana, a phonetic alphabet in broad alternate use in Japan, was presented to the 1967 Annual Meeting of the National Christian Council of Japan.

The proposal stems from a report by Iwao Yamada, of the National Study Center for the Japanese Language, which points out that the Chinese ideogram forming "Christian" does not appear in the government-approved lists of Chinese characters taught to youngsters in schools. Therefore many people do not recognize the term.

Objections to the change in writing style appear to stem in some cases from nostalgia, since the old characters have spelled "Christian" for a long time in The Church, and from the expense involved in amending the charters of the various Christian institutions to reflect the change in writing style. There is some suggestion that opposition to the change also is induced by distaste at bowing to any "government approved" list in matters of religion.

On the other hand, young people in general are reported to favor the change in the symbol for "Christian", and some groups who speak with loud voices for a witness to secular society have also indicated support for the proposal.

